



Better Bitters

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TOOLS:

- [Dropper bottles \(2\)](#)
available from sks-bottle.com.
- [Eyedropper \(1\)](#)
- [Jars \(2\)](#)
with tight-fitting lids, sterilized.
- [Strainer \(1\)](#)



PARTS:

- [Alcohol \(750ml\)](#)
high-proof vodka or neutral grain spirits such as [Everclear Grain Alcohol Scale](#).
- [Bittering agent \(1oz\)](#)
such as [gentian root](#) or [quassia wood](#), available from humboldtherbals.com.
- [Spices \(2oz\)](#)
1/2oz each of [fennel seeds](#), [coriander seeds](#), [caraway seeds](#), and whole [cloves](#). I buy spices from penzeys.com.
- [Dried fruit \(4oz\)](#)
unsweetened dried cherries or other [fruit](#).

SUMMARY

Bitters add a little depth and mystery to the flavor of cocktails and nonalcoholic drinks. You can buy them in most supermarkets, but why not make your own? It's so easy, and you can experiment with all kinds of flavors.

You can follow this bitters recipe, find a recipe online, or create something of your own. It's

important to have at least one bittering agent in the mix, like gentian or quassia. Aside from that, you can have fun mixing various flavors. It's a great way to make your party beverages truly special!

Step 1 — Measure.



- For an 8oz jar, you'll need about 2oz of herbs in total. Put the jar on the scale and reset it to zero.
- Add 1/2oz of bittering agent. Then add 1/4oz of each of the spices. Next, chop up 2oz of dried fruit, so more of its surface area will come in contact with the alcohol.
- Add it to the jar.

Step 2 — Steep.



- Pour vodka until the jar is filled to about 2" below the rim.
- Cover it tightly, and set it in a cool, dark place.
- Let the mixture steep for 1–2 weeks, gently shaking the jar daily.

Step 3 — Test.



- Now it's time to taste your bitters and see how the flavor is developing. But don't taste them straight! The flavor is much too concentrated. Try putting a few drops in a half glass of sparkling water.
- If you like the flavor, move on. If you're not quite happy, try tweaking it.

Step 4 — Tweak and bottle.



- If your bitters need a little flavor adjustment, you can add more of any of the ingredients you like and steep for another 1–2 weeks. Keep tasting and adjusting until you like the flavor.
- Strain out all the solid ingredients with a wire strainer. Press the solids to squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Pour the bitters into a dropper bottle and label. Store in a cool, dark place.
- Recipes and Resources:
 - [Cherry bitters, and notes on the bitters-making process](#)
 - [Cherry-vanilla bitters](#)
 - [Orange bitters](#)
 - [Basic bitters](#)

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